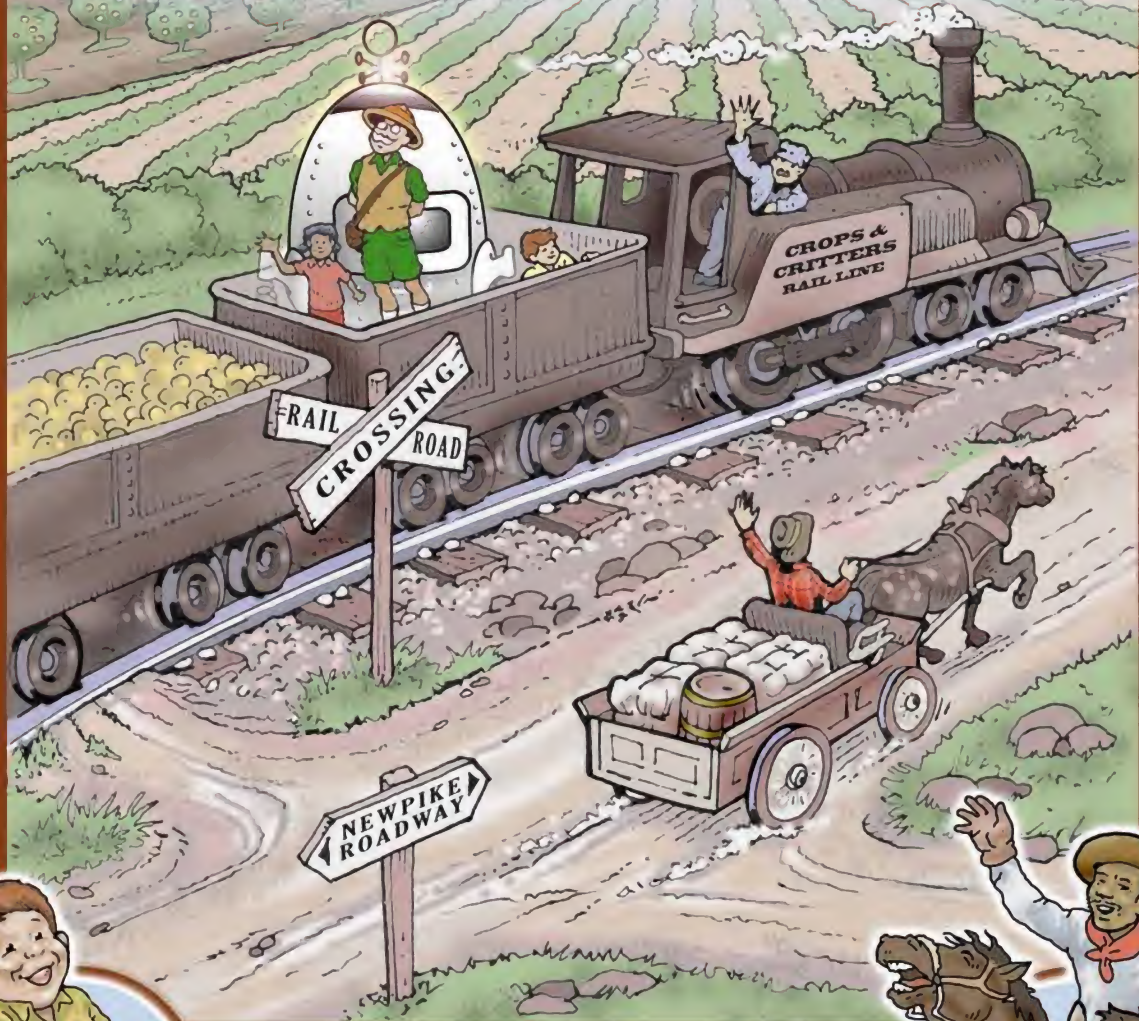




# Florida's Farm History!

Written by Arlette Roberge Illustrated by John Roberge



A Florida Agriculture  
Literacy Day Book

## Florida Agriculture Literacy Day

is an annual event held each spring in which hundreds of agriculture industry representatives read a designated children's book about agriculture in elementary school classrooms around the Sunshine State.

The event is a partnership between Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

## Florida Agriculture in the Classroom

is a non-profit association charged with educating Florida students and teachers about the importance of Florida agriculture. It is funded by sales of the agriculture specialty license plate known as the "Ag Tag."

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom is able to provide Agricultural Literacy Day books and other related items free of charge because of the funding it receives from the Ag Tag.



# Florida's Farm History!

A Florida Agriculture Literacy Day Book

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Florida Department  
of Agriculture and  
Consumer Services  
[www.FreshFromFlorida.com](http://www.FreshFromFlorida.com)



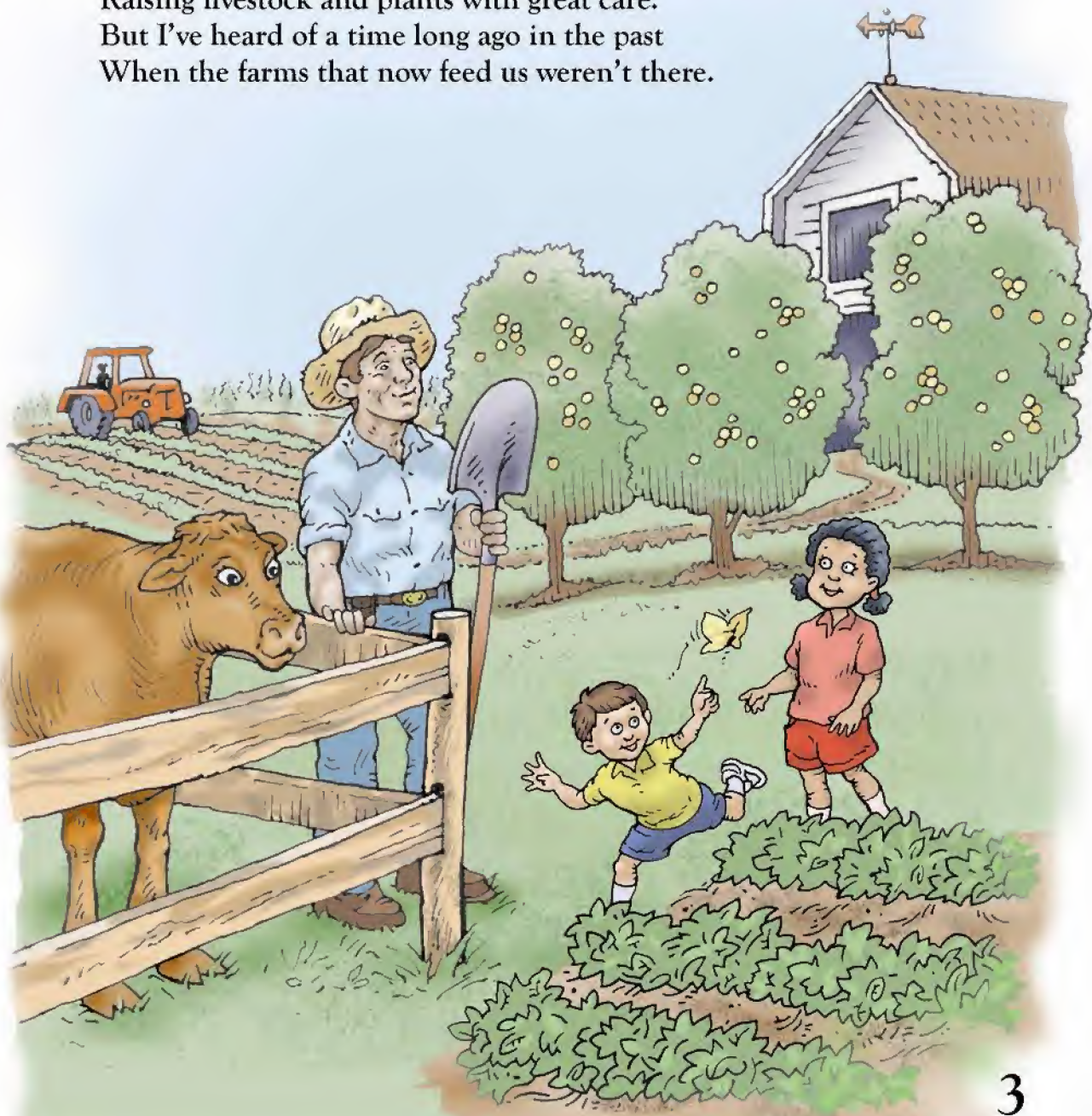
Florida  
Agriculture in  
the Classroom, Inc.

"Educate Students About  
Florida Agriculture"  
(352) 846-1391  
[www.agtag.org](http://www.agtag.org)

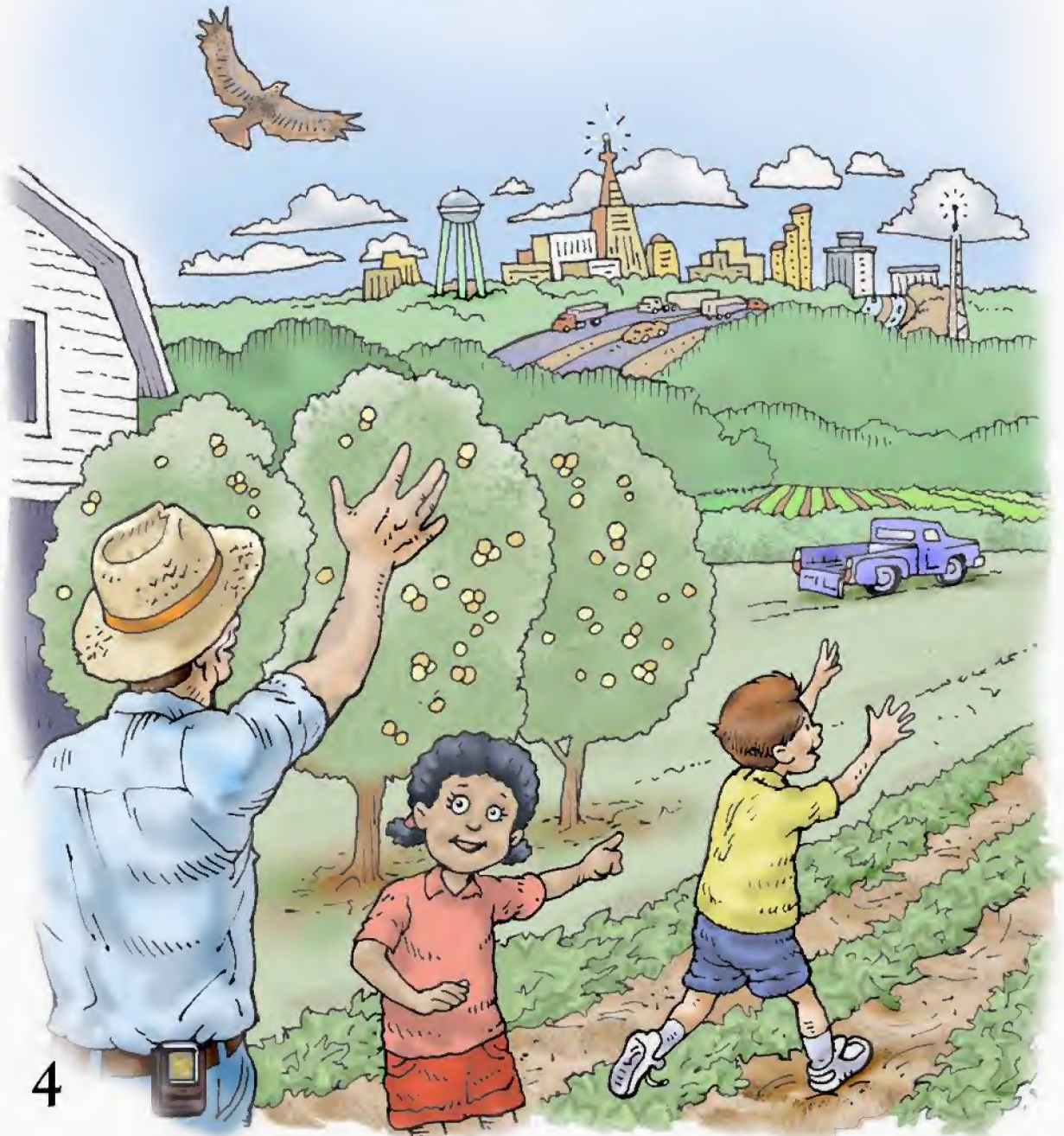
This book is dedicated  
to the tribes, colonies and generations of settlers  
who helped Florida prosper  
by learning to farm the land.



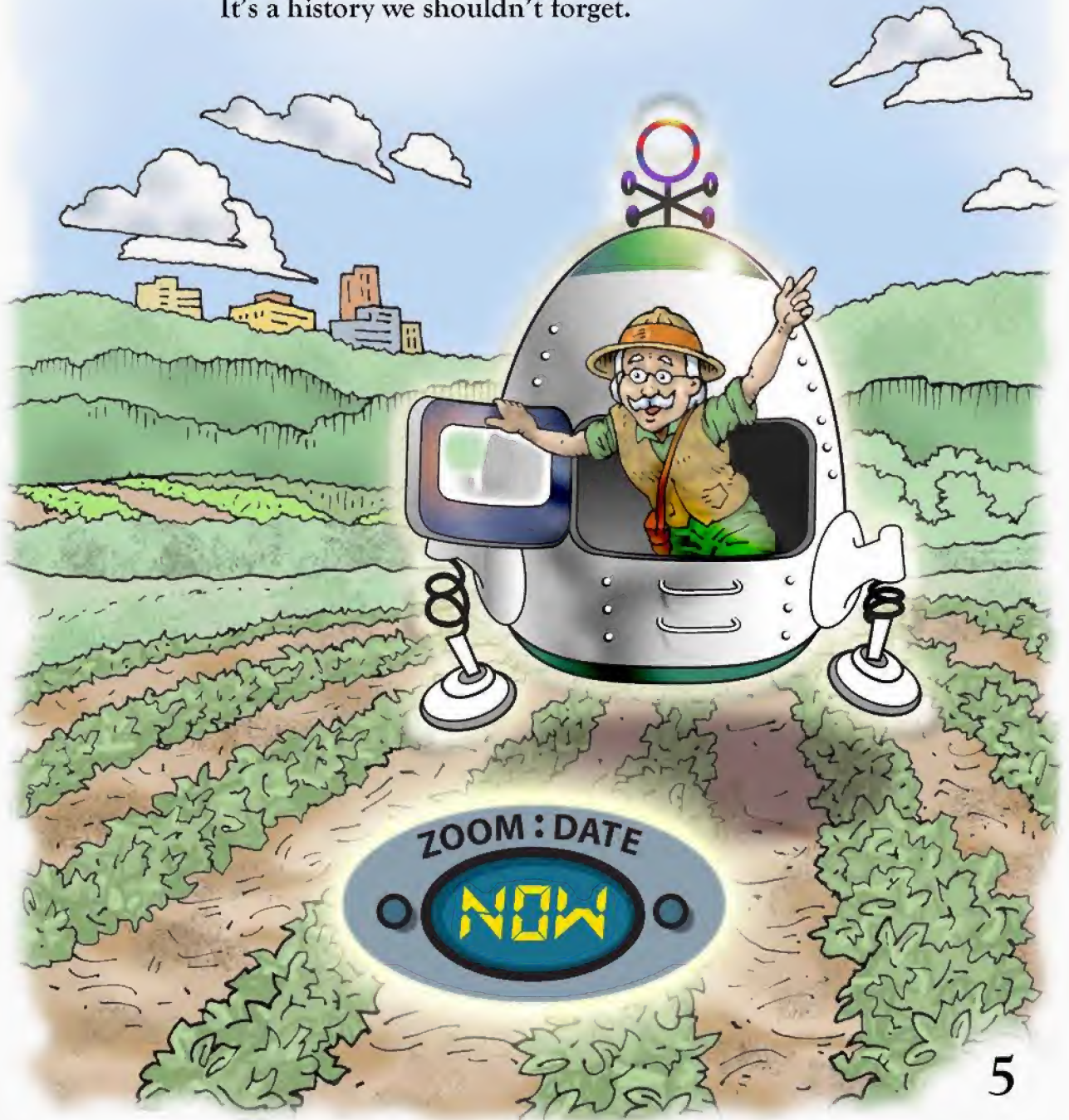
We've learned how our farmers grow so much food,  
Raising livestock and plants with great care.  
But I've heard of a time long ago in the past  
When the farms that now feed us weren't there.

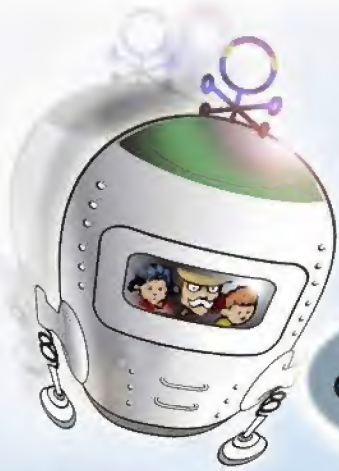


I wonder how farmers struggled back then  
To learn how to make our food grow.  
There were no computers, phones or big trucks.  
It was a Florida you might not know!

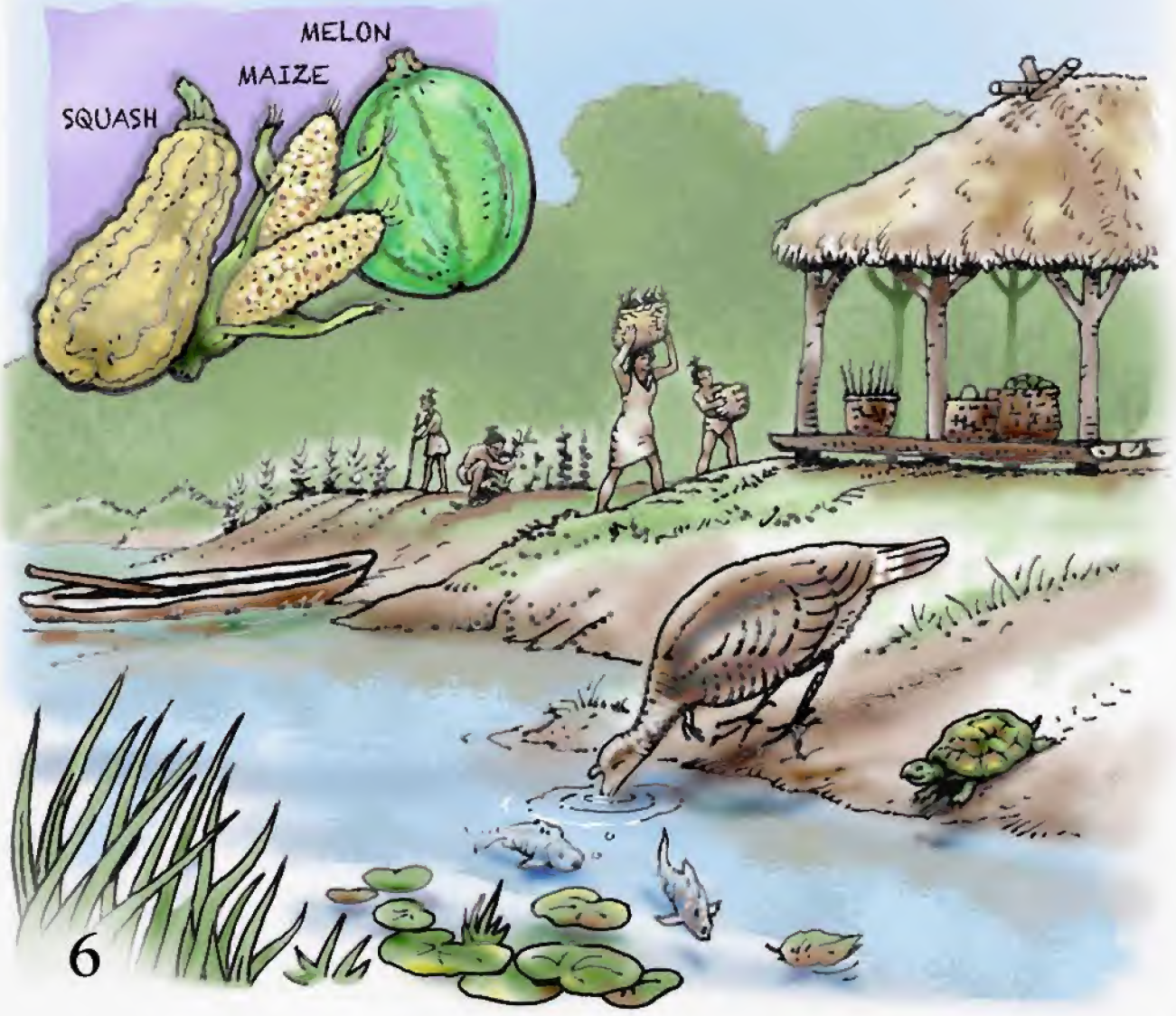


Let's go back in time to life on our land,  
Before grocery stores, cars and the 'net.  
It wasn't so easy to get enough food;  
It's a history we shouldn't forget.





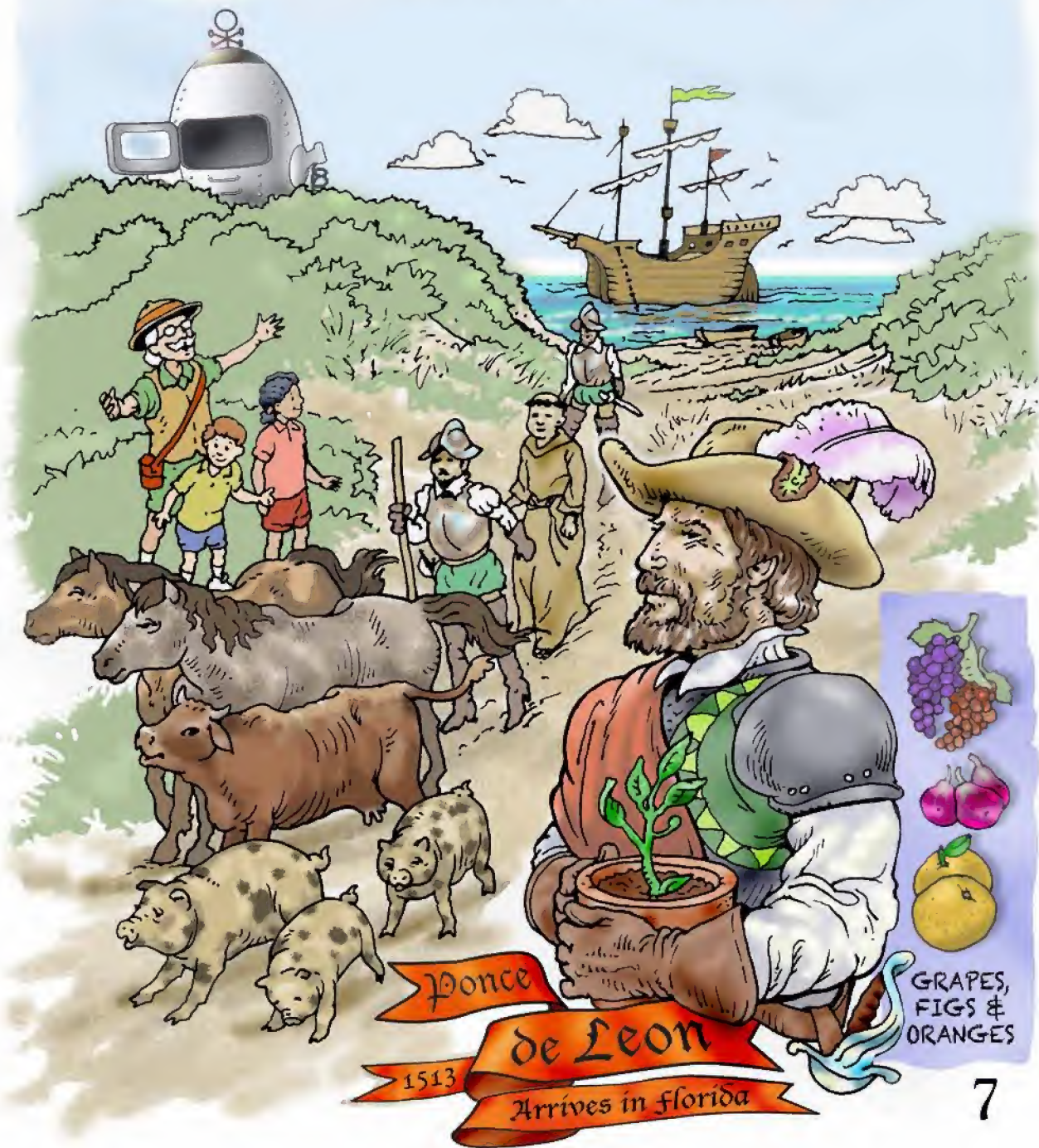
The Native Americans learned over time  
To grow squash, melons and maize.  
They fished and hunted. They stored food in huts.  
They worked hard just to eat in those days.







Ponce de Leon and crew sailed here from Spain.  
They brought cattle, horses and pigs.  
Wanting to start farms and settle the land,  
They planted oranges, grapes and sweet figs.



ZOOM : DATE

1560s

A French colony settled along the St. Johns.  
Back then it was called the 'River May.'  
The French and the Spanish fought for so long,  
It was hard to grow food in those days.



ZOOM: DATE

1600s

Orange trees were planted to give settlers food,  
Much effort was made to survive.  
Priests planted crops behind mission walls,  
Gardening helped people to thrive.



ZOOM : DATE

1760s

England gave homesteaders land for plantations,  
To raise crops and sell for a gain.  
Rice, corn and cotton were sold at the river,  
Along with indigo and sugarcane.



RICE



CORN



COTTON



INDIGO



SUGARCANE





ZOOM : DATE

1760s

Forests so tall were now a new crop,  
To make and sell all kinds of goods.  
Pines tapped for turpentine made glue for boats,  
And ships were built from different woods.





Cow hunters rode through the brush and the woods,  
To herd cattle that escaped to the wild.  
Their whips cracked to lead the cows to ports on the coast,  
Then to Cuba and the Caribbean Isles.

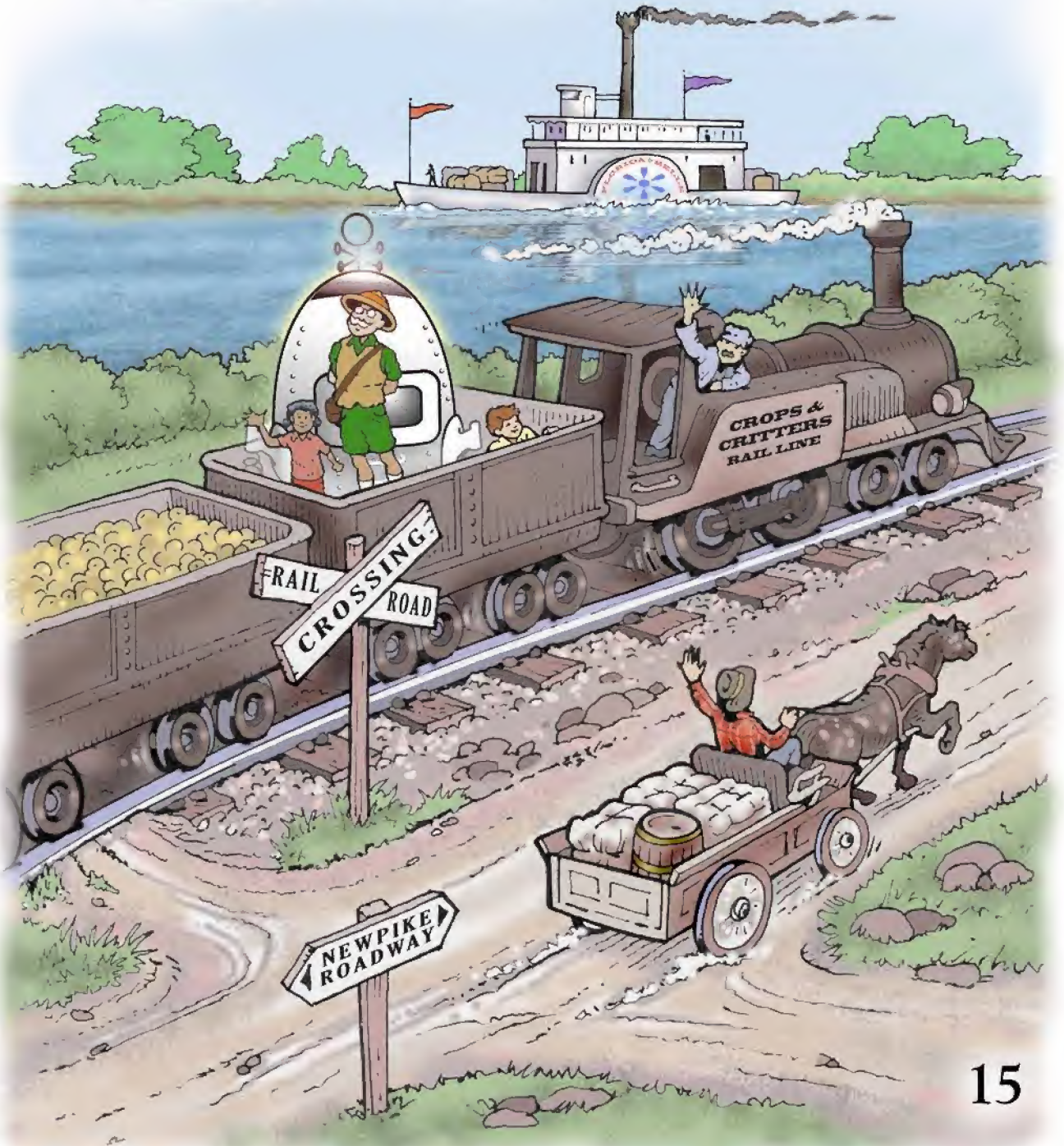




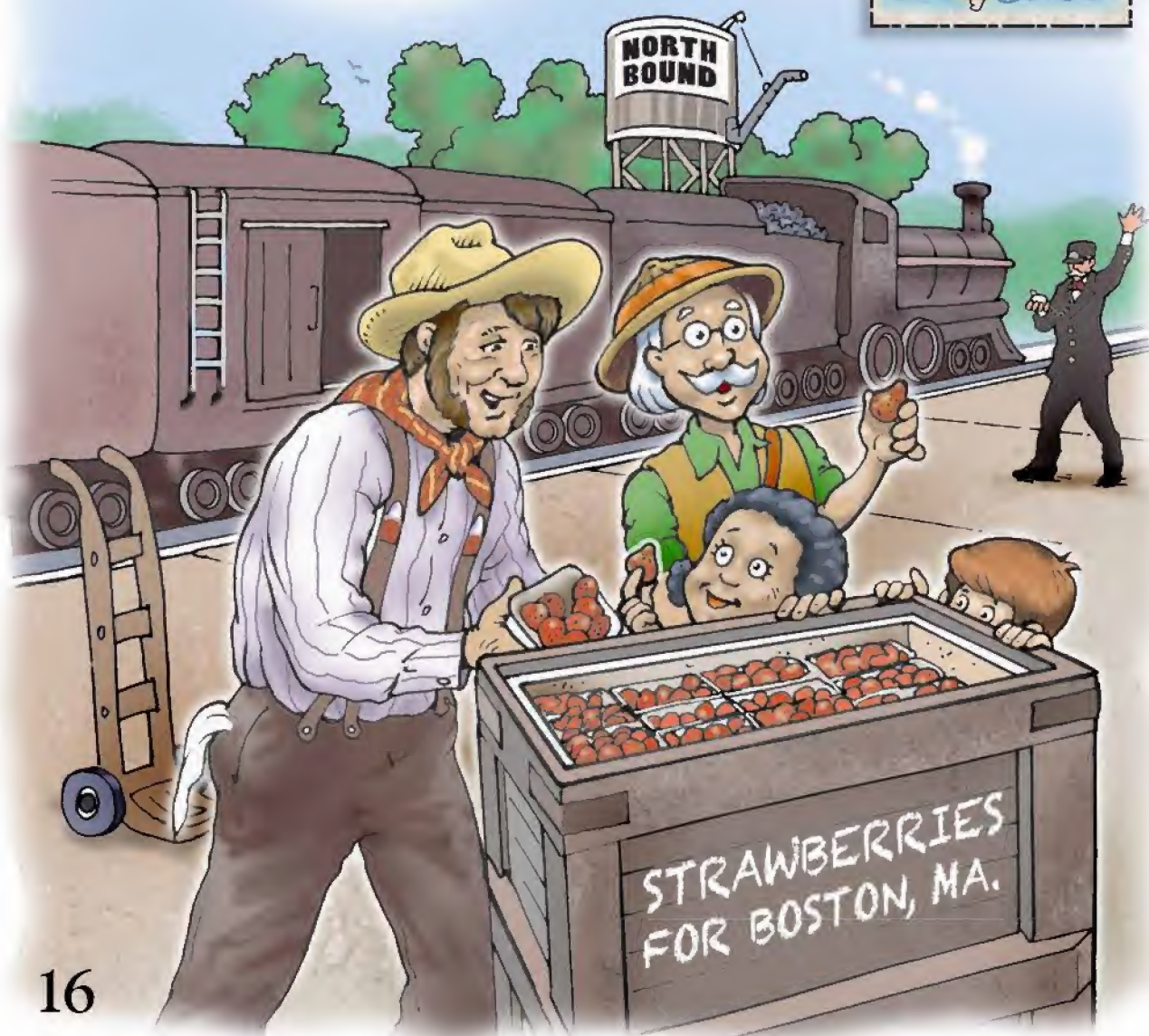
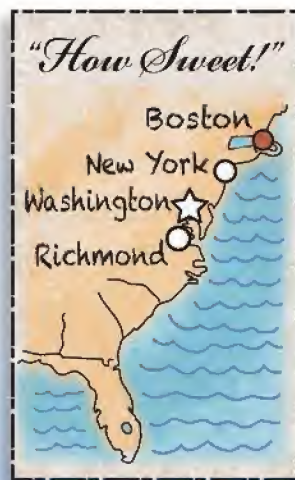
ZOOM: DATE

1830s

Crops could now get to the people who lived  
Near roads built from Indian trails.  
Steamboats and railroads sent food a long way,  
Faster than ships could set sail.



Henry Plant's railroad helped farmers to sell,  
Enough fruit for a cold winter's treat.  
They packed strawberries onto his trains,  
And the people up north said, "How sweet!"

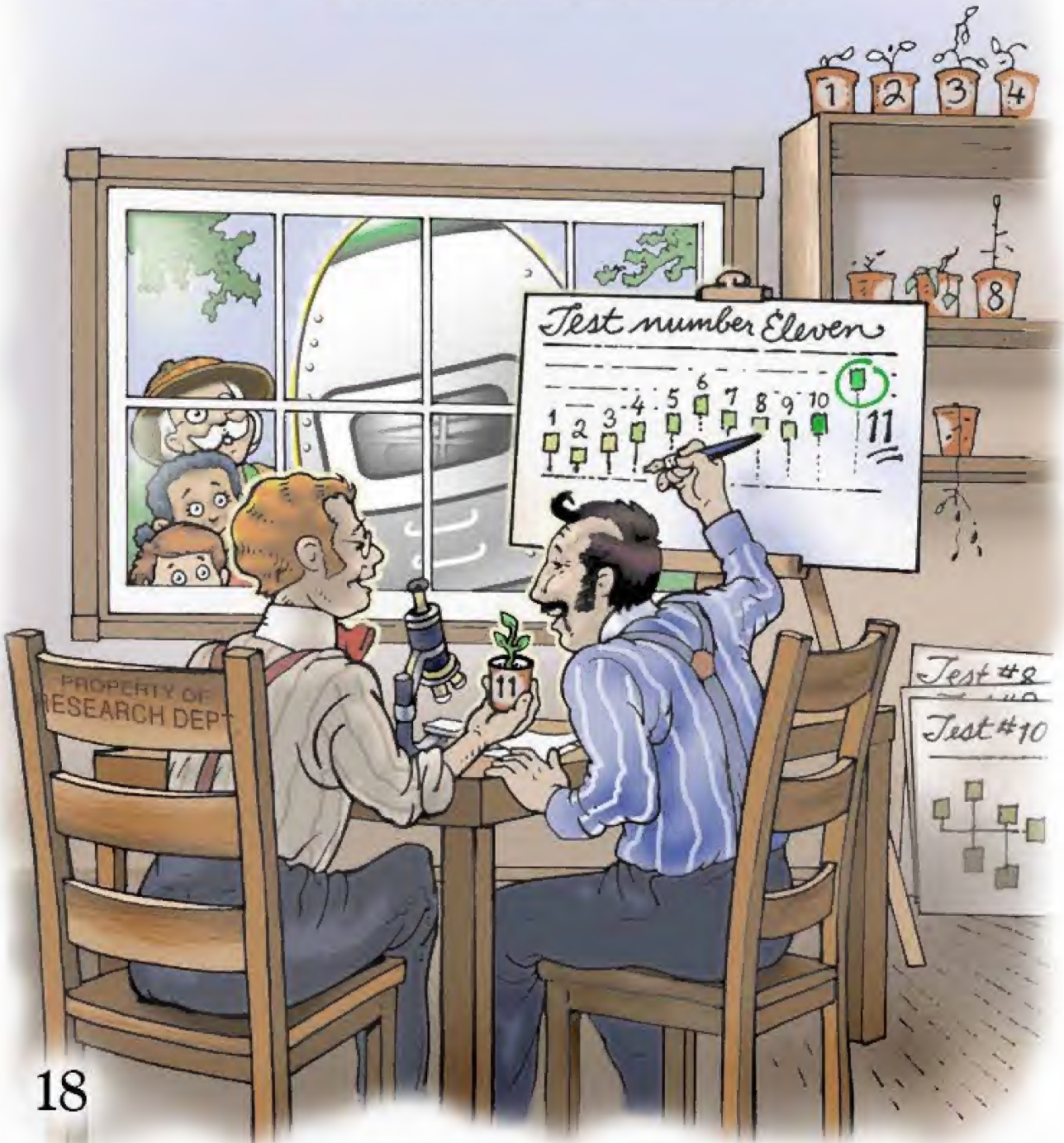


Phosphate was discovered in southern Fort Meade,  
Near a river we now call the Peace.  
We found that it made plants grow strong and tough  
And helped our world's harvest increase.





Research was needed and good science, too,  
Helping farmers to get the best yields.  
Experiment stations and colleges started  
The improvements we see in our fields.



ZOOM : DATE

1880s

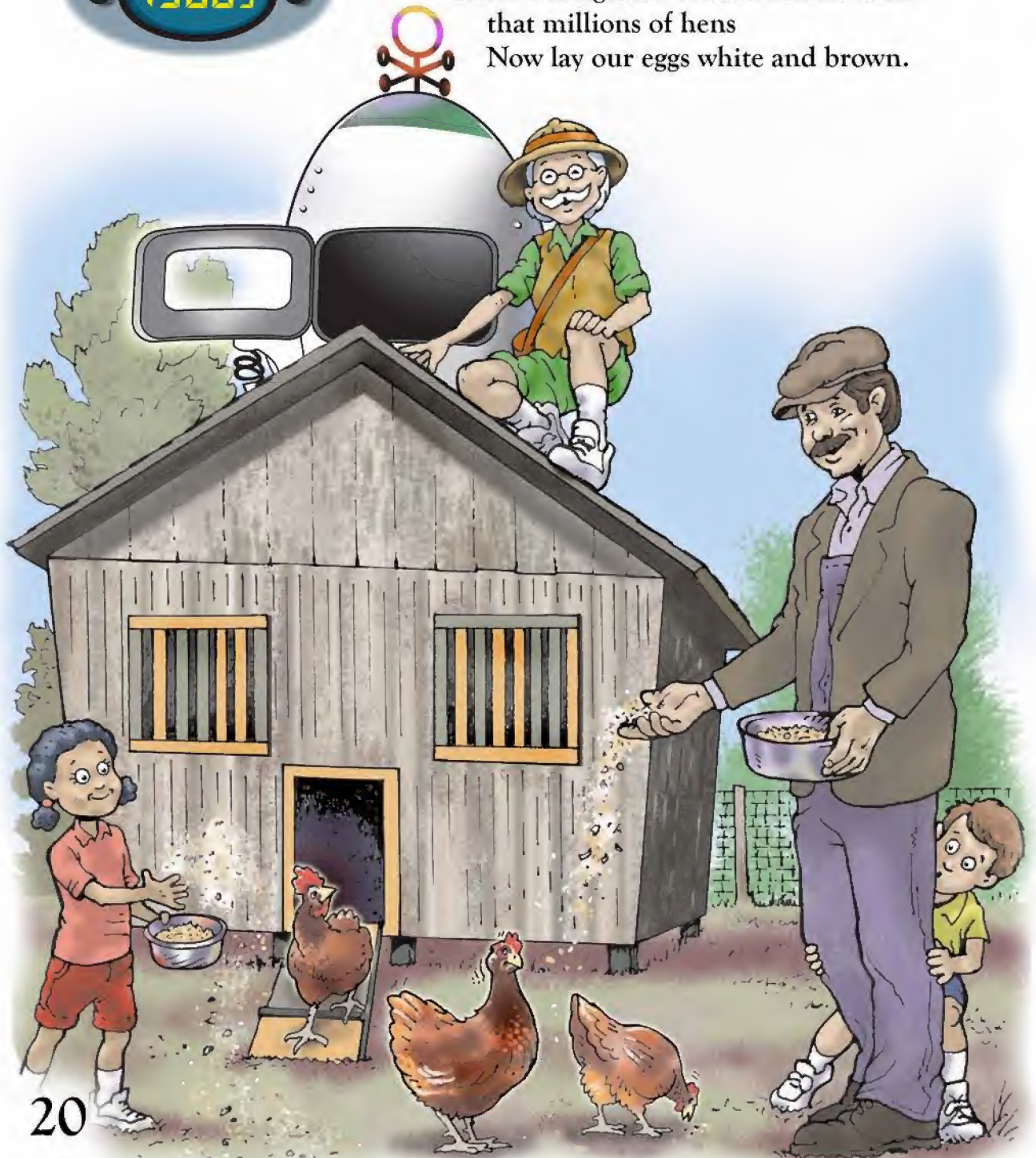
Dairies were formed when we bred the right cows,  
Providing milk for all in the land.  
Now milking machines, hoses and tanks  
Help us milk more than we could by hand.



ZOOM: DATE

1900s

Poultry farms began with one or two coops  
Brought by folks from a European town.  
These immigrants couldn't know then  
that millions of hens  
Now lay our eggs white and brown.

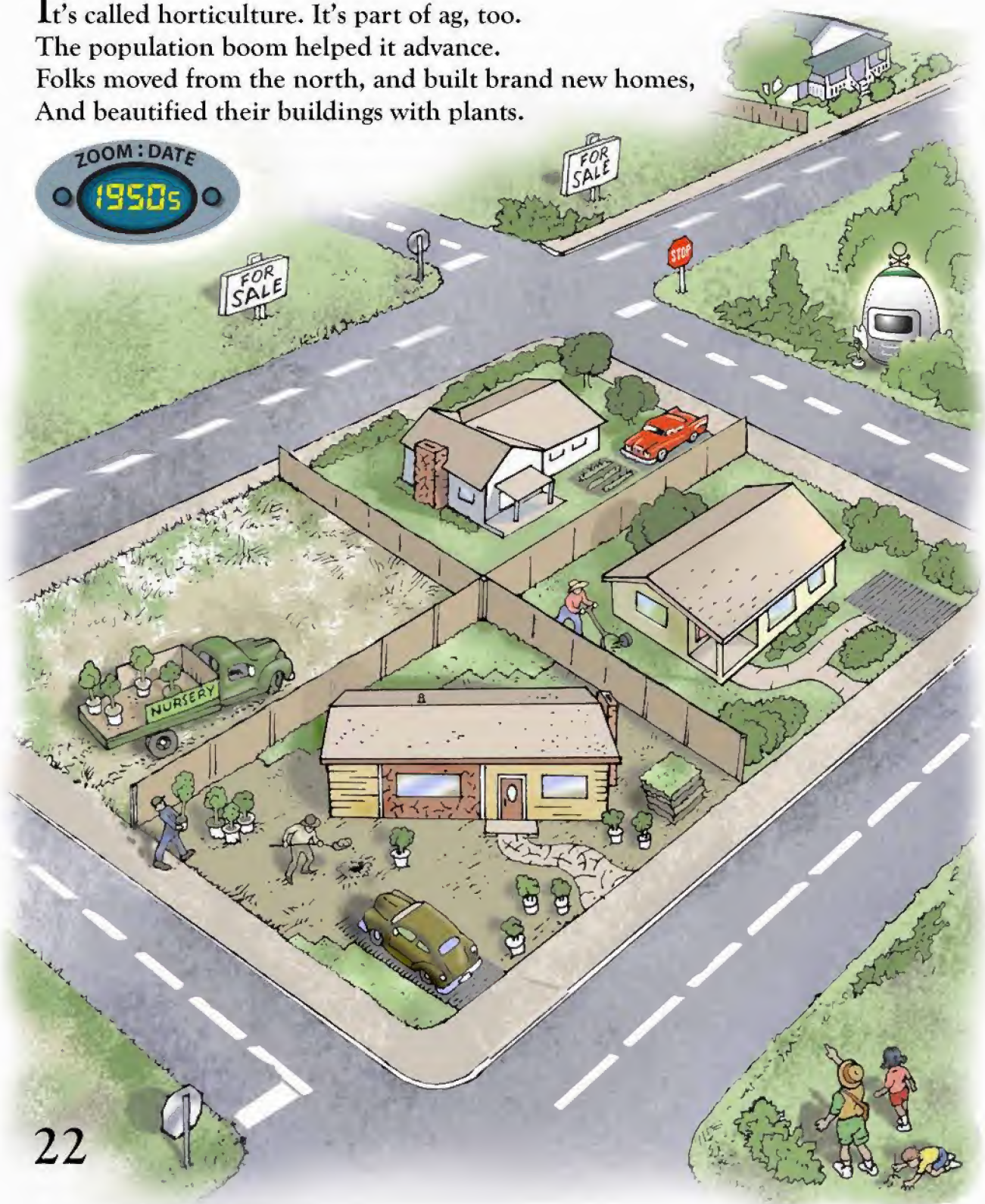


ZOOM: DATE  
1940s

Orange trees flourished and spread further south,  
Boxed fruit was packed and shipped with care.  
Then scientists discovered a way to freeze juice,  
For people to drink everywhere.



It's called horticulture. It's part of ag, too.  
The population boom helped it advance.  
Folks moved from the north, and built brand new homes,  
And beautified their buildings with plants.





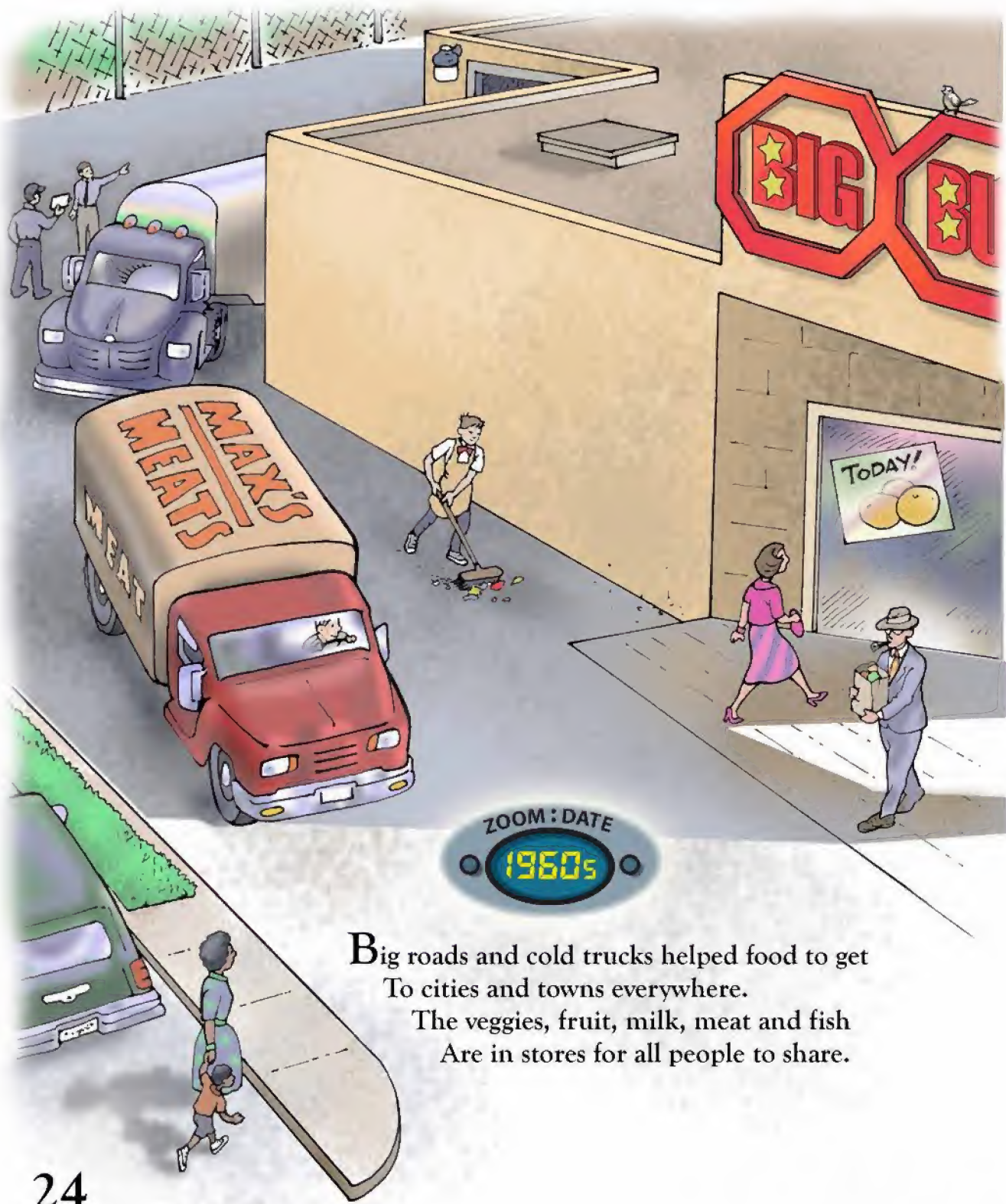
BURGER  
25¢

STRAWBERRY  
PIE 15¢

ORANGE  
JUICE 15¢

Veggies grew well in the middle and south,  
Where people now lived in our state,  
Tomatoes from Tampa, beans from Miami  
all ended up on our plates!





**B**ig roads and cold trucks helped food to get  
To cities and towns everywhere.  
The veggies, fruit, milk, meat and fish  
Are in stores for all people to share.





When freezes, big storms, fires and pests  
Destroyed years of hard work in one day,  
Farmers stood tough and worked hard to rebuild.  
Give up? Nope... never, no way!



1992: Hurricane Andrew hit Homestead (red dot).  
1998: Tornadoes did much damage in Central Florida.



ZOOM : DATE

2000s  
PLUS

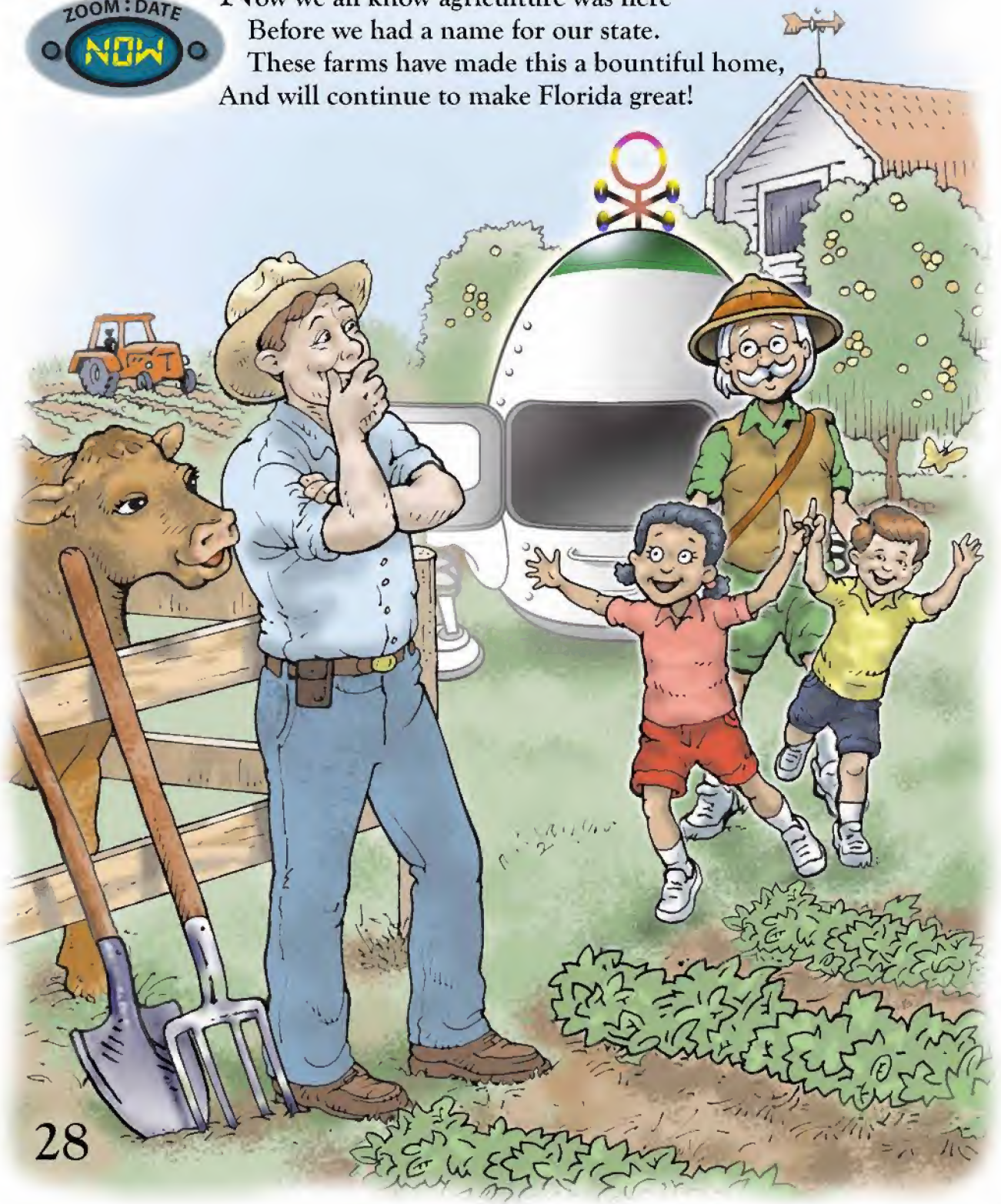
Genetics, new fuels and sustainable ag  
All help to feed the most people we can.  
Science helps farmers to better protect  
Our earth's food supply, water and land.



BIOTECHNOLOGY  
CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT



Now we all know agriculture was here  
Before we had a name for our state.  
These farms have made this a bountiful home,  
And will continue to make Florida great!



# FLORIDA AGRICULTURE

500 YEARS IN THE MAKING

## Prehistory

Native Americans cultivate edible crops in addition to hunting and gathering wild foods.

### 1500s

Spanish settlers introduce livestock and European crops.

Oranges are brought to Florida.

### 1600s

Spain continues to colonize Florida, import livestock and experiment with agriculture. Spanish colonies, under constant threat from French and English expeditions, provide sustenance for settlers.

### 1700s

Spain cedes control of Florida to the British. Exports of sugar, cotton and tobacco change the economy of Florida agriculture. Commercial lumber industry begins. Settlers harvest timber and turpentine for ship building.

### 1800s

Florida becomes a state. Commercial cattle ranching becomes established in central Florida. Introduction of railroads allows Florida produce to be shipped around the country. The citrus industry booms.

### 1900s

Improved transportation, refrigeration and processing open new markets for Florida products. Canned orange juice and frozen orange juice concentrate become available year round.

### 2000s

Scientific discoveries improve quality, quantity and shelf life of food.



1500 ----- 1600 ----- 1700 ----- 1800 ----- 1900 ----- 2000

“Agriculture was here  
before we had  
a name for our state,  
and will continue  
to make Florida great!”

Travel through time with a safari guide  
to learn about the long  
and exciting history of farming  
in Florida.



Florida  
Agriculture in  
the Classroom, Inc.